

Ordinance No. _____

ORDINANCE:

To grant Zoning Map
Amendment Application
MAP2010-00108, Mayor and
Council of Rockville,
Applicant

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, filed application MAP2010-00108, requesting that the property located at 602 Great Falls Road, Rockville, Maryland, and further identified as GR 22, Lot P827, containing 4,800 square feet of land, more or less, be placed in the Historic District; and

WHEREAS, the subject property was evaluated for historic, architectural and cultural significance to the City of Rockville, and the Historic District Commission found that the property met the criteria for local historic designation and recommended its placement in the Historic District; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council gave notice that a public hearing on said application would be held by the Mayor and Council of Rockville in the Council Chambers in Rockville on the 8th day of February 2010, at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as it may be heard, at which parties in interest and citizens would have an opportunity to be heard, which notice was published in accordance with the requirements of Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland; and

WHEREAS, on the 8th day of February 2010, the said application came on for hearing at the time and place provided for in said advertisement; and because of inclement weather, the public hearing was extended to the 22nd day of February 2010; and

WHEREAS, on the 22nd day of February 2010, the said application came on for further public hearing; and

WHEREAS, after consideration of the record on this application, the Mayor and

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Council has determined that the property located at 602 Great Falls Road, Rockville, Maryland, and further identified as GR 22, Lot P827, containing 4,800 square feet of land, more or less, is historically significant to the City and the County. The house at 602 Great Falls Road can only be understood within the context of the small community within which it is located. The area still represents the generational development of an African-American family enclave in its physical layout. A study of the deeds and wills shows the careful conservation of the original one acre acquired by Ann Willson, a free black woman, in 1845. The acre of land that she acquired was passed down through multiple generations, divided and re-divided to ensure that family members were provided for and that family remained close by. Family members and friends purchased additional adjacent parcels and built homes. Properties were sold within the family to ensure continuity of ownership. The property on which 602 Great Falls Road is located remained in family hands for one hundred years, until 1945, when it was sold to Ann Bullard. The house was constructed for Ann Willson's great granddaughter, Bessie Hill, in 1902. Ultimately the community consisted of seven lots with seven houses. Descendants of Ann Willson continued to reside in the community until circa 1977.

The front-gable frame house at 602 Great Falls Road is an intact example of vernacular or folk housing characteristic of working class residents of Rockville at the turn of the 20th century.

Although this particular house was constructed for African Americans, it is representative of the sort of housing that would have been built for both white and black families of modest means.

These houses followed traditional housing forms, similar to those constructed by middle-class white families, except on an even smaller scale and with little decorative detailing. The form of the Bessie Hill house is similar to the more substantial "L" plan Victorian houses of the day.

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This house form was first introduced in the 1840s and remained popular with folk builders well into the 20th century. Although it is diminutive in size, the Bessie Hill house retains the verticality of its models. In its present state it has no ornamentation. It is not known whether the house originally had architectural embellishments that deteriorated or were removed in later renovations. However, this is unlikely, given the simplicity of the interior. Its original beveled and rough sawn wood siding, side porch and original wood windows would have added interest and texture now missing; these features could be restored. The interior retains its original wainscoting in the kitchen as well as an interesting wainscoted winder stair that is more typical of the early 19th century than the first decades of the 20th century. This and other aspects of the rear wing suggest that it could possibly pre-date the main block.

The house at 602 Great Falls Road is of particular interest as an example of vernacular housing when viewed alongside the houses at 600 and 604 Great Falls Road in the same African American kinship community. The circa 1913 house at 600 Great Falls Road, constructed by Eliza Ann Johnson, mother of Bessie Hill, is of the same vernacular form, but is considerably larger and undoubtedly exhibited more architectural ornamentation. This house reflects the same architectural traditions as the Bessie Hill house, despite having been constructed a decade later.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council further finds and determines that it is appropriate to place the property located at 602 Great Falls Road, Rockville, Maryland, and further identified as GR 22, Lot P827, containing 4,800 square feet of land, more or less, in the Historic District; and

WHEREAS, the placement of the property located at 602 Great Falls Road in the Historic District Zone will:

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- a. Safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving the structure that reflects elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history;
- b. Stabilize and improve property values in the Historic District;
- c. Foster civic beauty;
- d. Promote the use and preservation of the structure for the education and pleasure of the residents of Rockville; and
- e. Promote the general welfare of the community of the City of Rockville.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND, that the application of the Mayor and Council of Rockville, MAP2010-00108, requesting the reclassification of the property located at 602 Great Falls Road, Rockville, Maryland, and further identified as GR 22, Lot P827, containing 4,800 square feet of land, more or less, and the same is hereby, granted, and the subject property is hereby included in and made a part of the Historic District.

* * * * *

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy
of an Ordinance adopted by the Mayor and Council at its
meeting of _____.

Claire F. Funkhouser, CMC, City Clerk